



Village of Saranac Lake

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VILLAGE OF SARANAC LAKE DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

4/2/19

ATTENDANCE

Development Board Members: Tom Boothe, Chairperson, Present
Donna Difara, Present
Bill Domenico, Present
Elias Pelletieri, Present
David Trudeau, Absent
CJ Hagmann, Alternate, Excused
Craig Catalano, Alternate, Excused

Paul Blaine, Development Code Administrator, Present
Cassandra Hopkins, Administrative Assistant, Present

CONVENE

Boothe opened the meeting at 6:00pm.

Motion to approve March 5, 2019 Regular Meeting Minutes by Difara, seconded by Pelletieri, all in favor, unanimous approval.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

BOARD ACTION

None

OLD BUSINESS

The board revisited the discussion on board member David Trudeau's end of term this month. There are term limits for service on the Development Board. A regular term on the Development Board is for five years. Boothe stated that it is unclear if board member Trudeau will or will not renew his position on the board. Paul Blaine stated that he will contact him before the next village board meeting.

Development Code Amendments proposed by the Development Code Administrator, Blaine, were brought to the attention of the board.

Blaine stated the overview of why the development code needs amending for clarity, and where the board is in ongoing discussions about the proposed code amendments.

Boothe stated that the purpose of tonight's discussion is to approve the wording of each code amendment to present to the village board.

Blaine stated each of the code amendments that are proposed and opened a discussion on the wording that is to be used in the presentation to the village board.

- Amendment 1 to Code section 106-81 D(1)(a) and D(2)(a) access, parking, and circulation, will provide an exception for only single-family dwellings in order to allow parking in front yards, as well as side and rear yards, and not to enforce the screening of that parking area.

Blaine stated that the reasoning proposed in the resolution to the village board is to provide relief to residential uses for off street parking in a developed community.

Pelletieri stated that around the neighborhood that he lives in within the village, he sees single family homes using front yards, so the use already exists and this does provide relief to those residents coming before the board.

Difara stated that this is a proposal for new projects.

Pelletieri stated that this is to provide relief in a developed community that already has single-family dwellings using the front yards.

Blaine stated that there is one resolution that the development board will propose to the village board for all amendments being discussed, that the wording of each code amendment will be finalized there.

Boothe stated that the board is all in favor with moving on to the next code amendment to be discussed.

- Amendment 2 to Code section 106-90 A(3) is to delete a repetitive line, A(4) to allow an exception for front setback for properties with side or rear facing primary entrances, and A(8) and A(9) to minimally increase maximum wall and structure height from 9 feet to 10 feet and 15 feet to 16 feet.

Blaine stated that this minor increase to the height limit is to reduce the amount of variance requests, although he noted that he can provide a 10% relief to applicants.

Domenico stated that there are older sections of the village where this allowance of additional height, to let's say, a two-story garage, could block another property's view.

Boothe stated that the board has issued variances in the past for garages that were made into two-story living spaces.

Blaine stated that the garage must be on a property where there already is a primary use so the view might already be partially obscured.

Boothe stated that the addition to accessory structure height to 16 feet is not that much.

Pelletieri stated that he would make the change for reasoning related to property owners' concerns brought up over the amendment to code section 106-81 D.

Difara stated her concern over this addition creating more commercial-looking properties in a historic village.

Blaine stated that this code amendment to 106-90 also serves to provide clarity for Schedule 2 and removes a repetitive line in the code.

Domenico stated that he is for making the change to accessory structure height because it will not materially change the variances that the board has already seen and it is being proactive for the community.

Boothe stated that the reasoning in the presentation to the village board needs to be clear. The board is in favor of moving on to the next code amendment to be discussed.

- Amendment 3 to Code section 106-91, fencing, retaining walls, and hedges, for E(5) to delete redundant line.

Blaine stated that this line is redundant and the purpose of getting rid of it is to make the code more concise and reduce confusion.

The board all agreed on that proposed code amendment change.

- Amendment 4 to Code section 106-112 alternate members section C, add illness or absence as reasons for substitution. Blaine stated that this is to add allowable reasons to appoint an alternate member to sit on the Board for a meeting. Boothe stated that the board is in favor of moving on to the next code amendment.

-Amendment 5 edits to Code schedule 2 dimensional standards to agree with recommendations made above. Blaine stated that this note in schedule 2 will make the code clearer to any reader. Boothe stated that the board is in favor of moving on to the next code amendment.

- Amendment 6 edits to Code schedule 2- Dimensional standards to remove max/min requirement of front setback dimension and replace with appropriate dimensions for each of the zoning districts. Amend Code section 106-41 G(1) to delete reference to the max/min setback and delete examples after code section 106-41. Blaine stated the history of the schedule 2 dimensional standards in the existing development code. Pelletieri stated that the whole idea that was put into place in the code was to find more uniformity in the village with front setbacks.

Blaine stated that he looked at the number of area variances received for front setback and all told there have been approximately 80 since 2008 in the village. This amendment would work to reduce that number.

Domenico said that a big driver should be to clean up the language to make it easier to understand.

Blaine stated that citizens do get confused when addressing front set backs on a village property and that a goal of the village board with this code is to make it so that anyone can read it and not be confused.

The board agreed that they could not think of better language to replace the existing language in schedule 2 that would be appropriate for all of the zoning districts.

Blaine stated that this proposed code amendment is to reduce confusion for new property developments and that maybe the best option is to go neighborhood by neighborhood to asses the best front setback distances.

Boothe stated that the rule is fine but does not fit every situation, the averaging language for max/min that exists should stay as the first step, but the board should propose to include a second step for lots that don't fit that initial language.

Difara stated that the secondary language should be not to exceed 30 feet as a front setback.

Domenico stated that this second step can help to clean up the language without causing confusion.

Blaine stated that he will come up with a more formal resolution and reasoning for the proposed code amendment changes to present to the Village Board of Trustees. This will be sent to each development board member prior to the next development board meeting where it will be discussed further.

NEW BUSINESS

The next time that the board will convene will be Tuesday, May 7th at 6pm where several projects within the Village of Saranac Lake will be presented to the board.

Blaine gave the board a 'Preview of Projects' coming up at next month's meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting by Difara, seconded by Pelletieri, all in favor, motioned carried.

Meeting was officially adjourned at 7:38.

Draft meeting minutes prepared by Cassandra Hopkins on April 4th, 2019, Community Development Administrative Assistant.